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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1, 3 - 11, 14 - 23, 26 - 33 and 36 - 39 remain pending in the application. Claims 13, 25 - 26, 35 - 36 and 41 have been objected to. Claims 1 - 12, 14 - 24, 27 - 34 and 37 - 40 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3, 16, 26, 27, 36 and 37 have been amended.

Claims 2, 12, 13, 24, 25, 34, 35, 40 and 41 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims add no new matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 13, 25 - 26, 35 - 36 and 41 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 13, 25, 35 and 41 have been incorporated into the base independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 respectively, while claims 26 and 36 have been amended to reflect that they depend from amended claims 16 and 27, respectively. All limitations of the original base and intervening claims have thus been incorporated into each of claims 13, 25 - 26, 35 - 36 and 41.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that amended claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3 - 11, 14 - 15, 17 - 23, 26,

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28 - 33, 36 and 38 - 39 are likewise allowable by virtue of their dependence from one of independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 - 8, 14 - 17 and 37 - 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by Walton et al (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732).

Independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 have been amended to include the elements of one or more of the claims indicated by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

Walton does not teach and the Examiner does not contend that Walton teaches the claimed subject matter of amended independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 are allowable. Each of claims 3 - 8, 14, 15, 17 and 38 depends, directly or indirectly, from one of claims 1, 16, 27 and 37, and therefore includes all the limitations of those claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3 - 8, 14, 15, 17 and 38 are likewise allowable.

Claim 2 has been cancelled and therefore the rejection of this claim is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 1 - 8, 14 - 17 and 37 - 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by Walton et al (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732).

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 27 - 28 and 31 - 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Walton et al. (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732) in view of Shinichi et al. (Pub. No. US 2002/0058483).

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 9 - 12, 18 - 23 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Walton et al. (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732) in view of Castelain et al. (US Patent No. 5,307,376).

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In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 24 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Walton et al. (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732) in view of Medvedev et al. (Pub. No. US 2006/0116155).

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 29 - 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Walton et al (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732) in view of Shinichi et al. (Pub. No. US 2002/0058483) as applied to claim 27, and further in view of Castelain et al (US Patent No. 5,307,376).

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Walton et al. (Pub. No. US 2003/0043732) in view of Shinichi et al. (Pub. No. US 2002/0058483) as applied to claim 27, and further in view of Medvedev et al. (Pub. No. US 2006/0116155).

Independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 have been amended to include one the elements of one or more of the claims indicated by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

The references cited in the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejections do not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, and the Examiner does not contend that the cited references teach or suggest, the claimed subject matter of amended independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 37 are allowable.

Each of claims 9, 11, 14 - 15, 17 - 23, 26, 28 - 33, 36 and 39 depends, directly or indirectly, from one of claims 1, 16, 27 and 37, and therefore includes all the limitations of those claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 9, 11, 14 - 15, 17 - 23, 26, 28 - 33, are likewise allowable. Claims 12 - 13, 24 - 25, 34 - 35 and 40 were cancelled and therefore the rejections of these claims are moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 9-12, 18-24, 27-34 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

CONCLUSION

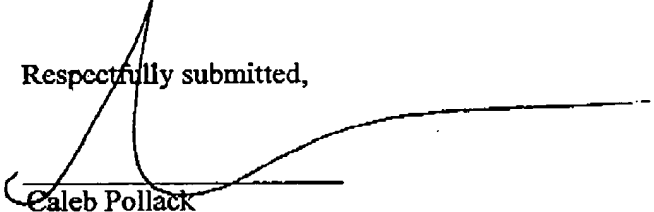
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the pending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

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Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 50-3355.

Respectfully submitted,



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